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Dr Stephen E. Levick
3 Narbrook Park
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Dear Dr. Levick

Thank you for sending me a copy of "Clone Being". The few passages I've had time to read and ponder so far encourage me to look forward to a refreshing, openminded approach to the psychosocial dimensions of cloning. Otherwise, I'd grown quite weary of the debates, and preferred to disengage (having been an early participant since about 1961.)

You did stimulate to think again about the puzzle, what are the intense fitness-disadvantages to uniparental reproduction that have largely effaced it from higher vertebrate biology (pace a few parthenogenetic turkeys.) You brought in the importance of parenting: to oversimplify, better to have 2 parents than 1. That led me to the further thought of broader kinship connections: better to be embedded in a larger, diversified genealogical network, from a psychosocial as well as genotypic perspective: better to have 4 grandparents than 1.

So a lot of the worry about cloning is how it might undermine social networks: clans are likely to elicit antibodies. I've remarked on the analogy to dynastic propagation, and how indeed I do worry about that, and have regarded it as a more imminent threat than clones. Too bad that issue didn't get into the Federalist Papers.

Tant pis! the prospect of cloned Bush's, Kennedy's, (or Saddam's) is daunting -- though probably beyond the reach of domestic legislation. And how the clones will war with one another, and internecine as well.

I hope you'll write an equally thoughtful book about genetic "enhancement", or "negative eugenics" -- there I did emit the E-word -- directed at avoiding overtly harmful genotypes. You'll understand why I embraced the "euphenic" alternative, perhaps wishful thinking that it will capture most of the benefits and least of the hazards of genetic progress.

Yours,

Joshua Lederberg

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P.S. have you followed Matt Meselson's work on parthenogenetic rotifers? cf: http://www.mcb.harvard.edu/meselson/

If you can get hold of it from Harvard- Widener Library- my son David Kirsch wrote a masterful and hilarious undergraduate thesis "Parthenogenesis in human beings: a controversy reconsidered" (Committee on History and Science - 1988).